

# EMERGENCY CLASSIFICATIONS

**D**epartment of Energy facilities use three broad categories to categorize departures from normal operating parameters: off-normal occurrences, unusual occurrences and emergencies. The criteria for classifying these events depends on whether they are safety or security concerns. If an emergency is declared, it falls under one of three classes:

## Alert

Least severe; no off-site release of radioactivity or hazardous materials. This type of emergency has consequences affecting only the facility.

## Site Area Emergency

Off-site releases within Environmental Protection Agency allowable limits. This type of emergency has consequences affecting only the INEEL.

## General Emergency

Most severe; releases exceeding Environmental Protection Agency limits have occurred or may occur. This type of emergency has consequences potentially affecting areas beyond the boundaries of the INEEL.

## Alert

An event in progress or having occurred which involves an actual or potential substantial reduction in the level of safety, or level of protection, of the facility. Protective actions are undertaken as needed on a limited basis.

Safety Criteria: Limited off-facility releases of radioactive or other toxic materials may occur, but don't exceed EPA permissible limits.

Security Criteria: Events involve actual or potential reduction in a facility's level of protection.

*Below, INEEL firemen suit up in preparation for a drill. The laboratory's firemen are among the best-trained in the West. Below right, sometimes it isn't a drill. A tank truck goes into action as firefighters combat a wildfire in the sagebrush desert.*



### *Site-Area Emergency*

An event in progress or having occurred which involves actual or likely major failures of facility functions which are needed for protection, or malevolent acts resulting in major failures of protective systems. Protective actions are undertaken for on-site personnel, the public and the environment.

Safety Criteria: Radioactive material releases may occur, but don't exceed permissible limits for off-site releases. Other toxic material releases may occur that have the potential to exceed off-site EPA permissible limits.

Security Criteria: Events involve malevolent acts that pose a potential for harm to on-site personnel or the public.

### *General Emergency*

An event in progress or having occurred which involves actual or imminent substantial reduction of facility safety, or catastrophic degradation of protection systems that could lead to substantial off-site impacts. On-site and off-site emergency response personnel may be activated, and protective action is undertaken as appropriate.

Safety Criteria: Off-site releases of radioactive or toxic materials may be expected to exceed EPA permissible limits.

Security Criteria: Events involve malevolent acts that might severely harm on-site personnel or the public.



*During a demonstration for the Safety Expo 2000 in Idaho Falls, INEEL firefighters load a 'victim' into an ambulance following a mock auto accident. The men demonstrate actual emergency response techniques repeatedly throughout the day for watching crowds.*